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ABSTRACT

The faculty's grading practices at Harcum Junior College were determined by questionnaires in 1967 and in 1969. Recommendations for changing the grading procedure were invited. Little change was noted from 1967 and 1969. In the recent study, however, fewer faculty members assigned grades on the basis of class curves alone; more were using a combination of curve, numbers, and letters; and more faculty members required assigned papers as part of the grade. In 1969, an analysis of student mid-term progress reports was made, to see whether particular groups or courses were associated with poor academic progress. Results showed that 22% of the students received one or more F, and that residents received F's more often than day students. Certain courses and programs had a large percentage of failures. In 1969 an evaluation of the performance of "academic risk" students was made. It was concluded that their level of achievement (over 50% earning 2.0 or better) was high enough to warrant further inclusion of such students in the freshman class. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (MS)

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ED035402

[Studies Related to Grades and Grading Practices at Harcum Junior College]

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1969

JC 700 009

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JAN 05 1970

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

ED035402

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

November 1969

TO: All Faculty and Staff

SUBJECT: Current Harcum Grading Practices and Recommendations - 1969

1. During November 1969 all Harcum full-time, part-time and Evening Division faculty were queried regarding their current grading practices. Their recommendations for modifications were also invited.

2. The following tabulations summarize the responses of the 35 or 83% who completed the questionnaire. Figures appearing in parentheses reflect the responses of the 67% of the 1967 Harcum faculty who responded to a similar survey reported to the faculty in June 1967. All numbers are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

3. Which of the following do you utilize in assigning course grades?

(a) numbers alone 15% (14%)
(b) letters alone 15% (20%)
(c) combination of 'a' and 'b' above 70% (66%)
(d) other:
knowledge of student (use of ability, achievement attitude)
check system
class participation, improvement, attitude, etc.
lab work, techniques
subjective impressions on basis of classroom participation; quality thereof
plus class participation
plus or minum for observations and periodical reports

Essentially the same pattern exists in both academic years with 4% more utilizing a combination of letters and numbers during 1969-1970 as contrasted with 1966-1967.

4. Do you assign course grades on the basis of:

(a) a curve? 6% (17%)
(b) numbers alone 14% (17%)
(c) letters alone 17% (14%)
(d) combination of 'b' and 'c' above 39% (54%)
(e) combination of 'a', 'b', 'c' above 24% (6%)
(f) other

reports, class participation, final exam
knowledge of student's ability, achievement, attitude
quality of work as multi-evidenced
class participation

As contrasted with 1966-1967 practices, two thirds less of the current faculty utilize "a curve" in course grade assignment. There is also a four-fold increase in 1969-1970 in the combination use of "a curve", 'humbers" and "letters".

5. Do you require assigned papers, and if so, what grade-weights do you assign to them?

(1) Yes, at least 40%
(2) Homework - math problems, one third
(3) Yes, mimimum requirement for course
(4) Assigned papers, homework, class preparation, I feel are mandatory - 30%
(5) Three papers - 10% each
(6) One third of final grade
(7) yes, up to one half
(8) Term projects - 20%; research 5%
(9) Three assigned papers, total 25%
(10) Same as test
(11) Standard assigned paper is equal to a major test. A project or term paper equals two major tests.
(12) Approximately 15-20%
(13) Yes, for some courses 50%
(14) Yes, but no specific weights assigned
(15) Term research papers - 25%. Short papers, 1 glass grade
(16) Approximately 25%
(17) Between 10 and 20%
(18) Yes, same as exams
(19) 25%
(20) Letters for determination in deciding final grades
(21) 10%
(22) For students with low marks outlines of chapters are suggested and discussed with me to determine what their problem is.
(23) The students write a short summary and analysis of a current article pertaining to science. The mark on this is included with their quiz and class mark which is about 20% of their final mark.
(24) Usually amounts to not more than 20% of numerical component of grade
(25) English comp - 50%, soph lit 20%
(26) Yes, approximately 20%
(27) Yes, approximately equal to major test.
(28) All assignments are equal in grade weights
(29) Yes, 25%
(30) One third.

In summary, 82% of the respondents do require assigned papers. The range of grade-weights assigned is 10% to 50%; the average for those who stated numerical grade-weights being 30%. In 1966-1967 the average grade-weight assigned was 27%

6. Do you assign grade-weights to class participation, and if so, what weights to you assign?

(1) Definitely - 30%
(2) Some small measure in some classes. Class participation needs to be more specifically and clearly defined for grading. It can be a delusion!
(3) Assign a high 70% for class participation, which on business subjects, I feel is a "must". Believe this creates interest and keeps class "lively". Encourage questions from students to stimulate trend-thinking on subject matter.
(4) No. It has been my experience that such a policy hampers class participation.
(5) Yes, varies. Usually in borderline circumstances.
(6) One third of final grade
(7) Yes up to 25%
(8) Yes - 5%
(9) 50%
(10) Class participation, homework, etc., taken together equals one major test
(11) Approximately 10%
(12) Yes, for some courses. Speech 10%; Drama workshop 75%
(13) 10%
(14) Only in borderline cases, in helping me to decide which grade to assign
(15) If a girl is in between two grades (final) then whether or not she participated in class (effectively) may influence her grade
(16) 10-20%
(17) 20%
(18) Yes, same as exams, approximately 7%
(19) 25%
(20) 10%
(21) I do not assign marks per se to class participation but intelligent comments, questions and participation are certainly leverage factor in their final mark - especially if their average is just below or near an A, B, C, etc.
(22) About 5-10%
(23) About 15%
(24) 20 to 25%
(25) Equal in all areas
(26) 25%
(27) One third

In summary, 80% of the respondents do assign grade-weights to class participation. The range of grade-weights assigned is 5% to 70%. For those whose stated numerical grade-weights, their average is 25%. In 1966-1967 the average grade-weight assigned was 21%.

7. Do you utilize mid-term examinations in course grade determiniations, and if so, what weight do you assign?

(1) one third
(2) Some courses yes; others no
(3) would rate exams as only 40% of final grade
(4) 20%
(5) I do not give a mid-term. I give 4 hour tests, each one new material - each test weighted 15%
(6) Same as other est
(7) The mid-term is a major examination
(8) Approximately 20%
(9) Approximately 25%
(10) About 15%
(11) 20%
(12) I give exams every two weeks. All measured equally for grade
(13) Mid-term is equivalent to a test grade
(14) 25%
(15) 15%
(16) 25%
(17) 20%
(18) 15 to 20%
(19) All exams equally weighted
(20) 25%
(21) one third

In summary, 62% of the respondents do utilize mid-term examinations. The range of weight assigned if 15% to 40%. For those stating numerical grade-weights, their average is 25%. In 1966-79 the average was 36%

8. Do you utilize final examinations in course grade determinations and if so, what weight do you assign?

(1) one third
(2) 25%
(3) 25%
(4) 20%
(5) 25%
(6) 25%
(7) 20%
(8) 25%
(9) 25%
(10) 25%
(11) 25%

(12) one third
(13) 20%
(14) 25%
(15) 25%
(16) 20%
(17) 25%
(18) 30%
(19) 25%
(20) The final equals two major tests
(21) Same as other test
(22) 30%
(23) 20%
(24) 20%
(25) Equivalent to one study unit
(26) one third
(27) 25%
(28) 30%
(29) 40%
(30) one third
(31) one third
(32) 30%

In summary, 94% of the respondents utilize final examinations in course grade determinations. The range of weight assigned is 20% to 40%. For those stating numerical grade-weights, their average is 26%. In 1966-1967 the average was 28%.

9. Are there other factors you use in determining grades?

(1) Since I am a believer that results speak for themselves; results exemplified in class preparation, class work, review testing; tell me what I want to know and give me concrete basis for marking.
(2) Two quizzes - 10% each
(3) Tests and quizzes
(4) Interest, cooperation, attendance
(5) I give 10 unannounced 10-minute quizzes during the semester - total weight is 10%. If a girls is in between two grades (final) her motivation and coming for help, etc., may influence which grade she receives.
(6) Activity during class hours
(7) Attitude, outside work, attendance
(8) Student's motivation, her desire to do as well as she possibly can.
(9) A minimum of 6 hour-long exams, counting 75% of final grade.
(10) Judgement, tolerate a certain amount of mechanical errors
(11) Class participation and attendance does effect my opinion of the class which is then reflected in the curve applied to the class grade. This is explained to the class.

(12) In lab yes. Lab sheets, individual oral quizzes, their lab techniques, special lab research reports are important.
(13) Projects, extra-credit papers, extraordinary unsolicited contributions to class which evidence concern for subject and student initiative.
(14) Weekly themes
(15) Bi-monthly evaluations based on quizzes and daily work; book reports; laboratory participation.
(16) Panel discussions; general attitude in class
(17) Interest, enthusiasm, extra work involved.

On the total, respondents, 50% indicated other factors they utilize in determining grades. In 1966-1967 some 62% indicated other factors.

10. As a grading technique, do you feel that a plus and minus system should be combined with letter grades? Why?

Yes 62% No 38%

(1) There is quite a scope between a B- and a B+. It becomes a more personal grade.
(2) Because the jump from 80 to 89 seems too great. There's quite a difference from the student making just a B to the one who is close to an A.
(3) I feel plus should be combined with letter grades to give students more accurate idea of where they stand; e.g. low C or high C, C+.
(4) Would be more meaningful to students and at times more just.
(5) No realistic, permanent record value
(6) It's hard enough as it is to settle in my mind whether a student should receive an "X" or a "Y" grade.
(7) A 10-point span is rather large and a plus or minus would give a better indication of the student's Position in that range. It would also help in determining the overall picture of borderline cases.
(8) Especially for mid-term grades it gives the student a better feeling of where she stands, i.e. a plus indicating that with a little more effort they can achieve higher marks, a minus indicating that they had better work to maintain their present standing.
(9) May possibly arouse competitive urge.
(10) A "C" student may be close to a "B" or a "D". Stimulation of the student. Teaching device.
(11) Separates a low C- student from a high C+ student.
(12) For mid-term I tell the student the approximate numerical figure. I believe that a student does excellent, superior, average, etc.
(13) At mid-term

(14) Closer evaluation of actual work done.
(15) The range of a "C" for example is 70-79. This is a large range and a plus and minus system differentiate between a low "C" for example and a high one. This is more satisfactory for both the sutdent and the teacher.
(16) It allows for greater discrimination.
(17) Combining another system with an already complex system would add to its unweildy nature.
(18) The Harcum scale allows a 10 point range for a letter grade. The + or - gives an indication of the quality of the letter grade. A 70 that represents a "C" grade is quite different from a 79 that represents the same "C" grade.
(19) A plus is incentive to push for the next grade. A minus is a warning.
(20) It is too picayune.
(21) There's enough emphasis placed on grades as it is.
(22) If grades are to be a goal, greater precesion can be achieved by adopting a numerical system.
(23) Only possible exception to this flat "no" would be in the case of the borderline grade where the student has made a grade only by one or two points. Grade would perhaps show a B-; made by a student as a low B of 81, as compared with the "B" student of 89, but not quite an "A" student with 90.
(24) Better differentiation within the C & B grades for evaluation; for recommendations for jobs and advanced schooling. On grade sheets and records this is a help for recommendations from the school at a future date when present personnel may have departed. I am in favor of retaining the grade-point evaluations of 4-3-2-1 for A-B-C-D. But I am in favor of plus and minus on records and reports. Part of the problem is the required 2.0 for graduation combined with the wide-number spread of C (70-79) and B (80-89). There is considerable difference in ability between a "C" student with 78 and a "C" student with 70; likewise for a "B" student with 88 compared with one with 80.
Several students have said a 70-C is easy to get in most courses. This makes those who might work harder for 78 become somewhat discouraged since there is no difference between them.
There is another form of grading that we might adopt using 1.8 for graduation and making the D (65-72 or 73), and raising the C somewhat - or some variant of this.
(25) There is a shade of difference between an outright A and a simple B.

11. <u>What modifications do you recommend in the present Harcum grading system?</u>

(1) Adding the plus and minus system whether or not quality-point computation is changed.
(2) The above addition of + and -.
(3) Less stress on exams. Trying to develop attitudes toward "learning" whereby the student is more relaxed and is conscious of the knowledge and information she has acquired and is not constantly being tested.
(4) In grading our physical education service class we give a P (pass) or F (fail) grade. I would like to give P-H (pass with honors), P (pass) and F (fail).
(5) For physical ed: - Passing H (passing with honors) for all those who really put some effort and enthusiams in the course. With only 1 hour per week it is impossible to give a letter grade, however, this would give credit where due.
(6) I would recommend that some thought be given to the possibility of putting required on elective courses outside the students' major field on a Pass-Fail or High Pass (excellence) - pass—fail basis. The percentage correlation with letter-grades should be abolished, as inappropriate at the collegiate level.
(7) Raise the base grade of 65 to 70. Change other grades upward.
(8) I think quizzes and tests given frequently enough is more beneficial to the student. Finals as such could be a review test which would not petrify the student.
(9) OK as is. Leave discretion of grading technique to teachers.
(10) Pass-fail for career programs; do not change for transfer courses; teachers send in letter grades to Registrar even for career courses (for records) in case someone in that program desires to transfer.
(11) In certain courses - conceptual - perhaps pass-fail might be more realistic.
(12) I would like to see a de-emphasis on marks, but at present I am satisfied with the system.
(13) Less stress on rote memory examinations; more on class performance and assigned work.
(14) I favor a pass-fail system for part time students.
(15) Unexcused absences
(16) Quality letter grades with plus-minus, or define grades on a scale that is more descriptive of the student's performance.
(17) That there be no mid-term grades. Because of mid-term grades some girls have had three mid-terms in one day. If not this, then they've had 4 or 5 mid-terms in one week. I feel tests should be spread out.

(18) Add + or - to letter grades
(19) Add + or - to grades.
(20) It might be a good idea to allow students to "challenge" certain courses; that is, if she feels qualified she can simply sit for the final examination. The grade she would get, and certain other restrictions, would need to be worked out. This would serve at least two purposes that I know of personally. First, an excellent writer -- this excellence would be discernible in the first few weeks -- could be excused from attending classes and workshops in material she already knows and which would tend to bore her. She could be assigned things to read in linguistics, grammar, the history of the English language, etc., and then be examined. Another good reason for this happened recently in the Evening Divison. A woman who has received awards for teaching, who has spent twelve years in the classroom, and who has published in her field, was delayed from taking her degree because she lacked a few credits in courses that simply had not been offered for one or two semesters. She was allowed to take special examinations in these and passed with the grade of "A" in each

I would also like to see final examinations waived for students who have an "A" average going into them. This is especially desirable in English composition; a student doing excellent work for thirty weeks -- or even fifteen -- could be given her "A" (she is unlikely to do lesser work at that stage) and be allowed to study for her other, more factual, examinations. It would be a further incentive to excellence and would be a reward for performance. This point could be made very strongly at the beginning of the semester, thus providing the clear incentive and preventing grumbling.

TO RECAPITULATE	1969-1970	1966-1967
1. Percent of faculty participating	83%	67%
2. Elements utilized in grade assignment:		
(a) Numbers	15%	14%
(b) Letters	15%	20%
(c) 'a' & 'b' above	70%	66%
3. Grades assigned on basis of:		
(a) Curve	6%	17%
(b) Numbers	14%	17%
(c) Letters	17%	14%
(d) 'b' & 'c' above	39%	54%
(e) 'a', 'b', 'c' above	24%	6%
4. Percent requiring assigned papers	88%	31%
(a) Range of grade-weights assigned	10-50%	10-60%
(b) Average grade-weight assigned	30%	27%
5. Percent utilizing class participation in grading	80%	80%
(a) Range of grade-weights assigned	5-70%	5-65%
(b) Average grade-weight assigned	25%	21%
6. Percent utilizing mid-term exams in grading	62%	63%
(a) Range of grade-weights assigned	15-40%	12-50%
(b) Average grade-weight assigned	25%	36%
7. Percent utilizing final exams in grading	94%	70%
(a) Range of grade-weight assigned	20-40%	12-50%
(b) Average grade-weight assigned	26%	28%
8. Percent utilizing other factors in grading	50%	62%
9. Percent who believe plus and minus system should be combined with letter grades:	Yes = 62%	No = 38%
10. Percent recommending modifications in present Harcum grading system:		60%

From the above recapitulation it is clearly evident there have been little substantive changes in grading practices during 1966-1967 and 1969-1970. The principal shifts include:

(1) Two thirds less of current faculty utilize "A curve" in course grade assignment as contrasted with 1966-1967 faculty.

(2) There is a four-fold increase in 1969-1970 in the combination use of "A curve", "Numbers" and "Letters" in grade assignments.

(3) There is almost a three fold increase in 1969-1970 in required assignment of papers as part of grade assignment.

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Research Consultant

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

Academic Counseling and Harcum Earned Semester Grade-Point Averages

1. Are Harcum students who have earned less than a 2.0 average for any semester unlikely candidates for graduation? To answer this question, a records analysis was recently completed, the sample being the academic records of 2336 full-time Harcum students enrolled between September 1961 and June 1969; eight (8) academic years.

2. Clearly, this is not a testable hypothesis, for what is the operational definition of the phrase, "unlikely candidates for graduation"? However, the total population of all full-time students who attended Harcum during the last eight academic years was considered. THerefore, the results reported do, in fact, reflect the total experience of all full-time students at Harcum who earned less than a 2.0 average any one or more semesters.

3. Of the 2336 student records examined, 745, or 32% revealed one or more semesters with a 2.0 average.

4. Of the 745 students earning less than 2.00 averages, 294, or 40%, did graduate and earn their associate degrees.

5. Some 451 students, or 60% of those who earned less than 2.0 averages, did not graduate and earn their associate degrees.

6. It can therefore be anticipated, for any given semester, that an average of at least 2 out of each 10 full-time students will earn a grade-point average of less than 2.0.

7. From among those who earn less than a 2.0 semester grade-point average, there are only 4 chances in 10 that they will satisfactorisly complete their studies and graduate.

8. And finally, from among those earning less than a 2.0 grade-point average any semester, there is a strong, 60% liklihood, that they willnot graduate.

9. Therefore - for purposes of academic counseling, Program Directors and others concerned with student advisement should fully apprise appropriate students of these facts. Obviously, college personnel can only indirectly influence (motivate) student action in this area. The final decision, and necessary effort to improve academic performance, remains the direct and personal responsibility of each student.

Boris Blai, Jr. Ed. D.
Director of Research

December 1969

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE

BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

November 1969

TO: All Faculty

SUBJECT: Analysis of Mid-Term Academic Progress Reports - Fall 1969 and Fall 1968

1. Who has earned failing (F) progress report grades, and are there any discernable patterns evidencing particular groups, courses, or other identifiable characteristics associated with such poor academic progress?

2. To answer these questions a records analysis was made of Fall 1969 mid-term progress reports, and the results are summarized in the following tabulations and comments. Throughout, all numbers are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

A - Mid-Term "F" Grades

Juniors	= 88 or 23%	
Seniors	= 51 or 21%	
Total	= 139 or 22%	Better than 1 out of 5 had one or more "F" grades
	(Fall 1968 = 4%)	
Residents	= 116 or 25%	1 out of 4
Day	= 23 or 14%	1 out of 10 (approximately)

B - Multiple "F" Grades

	Number of F Grades				
	2	3	4		
Juniors	= 23	4	2	= 29 or 8%	
Seniors	= 10	6	2	= 18 or 7%	
Totals	= 33	10	4	= 47 or 8%	-- 8 out of each 100

By Programs and Classes (Numbers in parentheses = number of students)

2F's	3F's	4F's
Junior Merchandising (6)	Senior Merchandising (4)	Junior Legal Secretary (1)
Senior Early Childhood (6)	Junior Early Childhood (3)	Junior Early Childhood (1)
Junior Early Childhood (5)	Junior General Secretary (1)	Senior Early Childhood (1)
Junior General Studies (3)	Senior Early Childhood (1)	Senior Para in Education (1)
Junior Liberal Arts (2)	Senior General Studies (1)	
Junior Medical Secretary (2)		

Junior Education (2)		
Junior General Secretary (2)		
Senior Merchandising (2)		
Senior General Studies (2)		
Junior Para in Education (1)		
Junior Business Education (1)		
Senior Physical Education (1)		
Total = 33	Total = 10	Total = 4

C - "F" Grades (As percentage of total students assigned F grades)

Early Childhood Education	39 or 29%	
Merchandising	32 or 22%	
General Studies	18 or 12%	
	Total = 63%	(these three programs also enroll 63% of the students)
Education	8 or 6%	
General Secretarial	8 or 6%	
Liberal Arts	7 or 5%	
Visual Arts	7 or 5%	
Para in Education	4 or 2%	
Physical Education	3 or 2%	
Legal Secretarial	3 or 2%	
Business Education	2 or 1%	
Speech and Drama	2 or 1%	
Executive Secretarial	1 or 1%	

D - Juniors and Seniors Receiving "F" Grades (by program)

Program	Juniors	Seniors	Totals by Programs
Early Childhood Education (220	14%	22%	13%
Merchandising (107)	34%	23%	30%
General Studies (66)	32%	22%	27%
Liberal Arts (41)	18%	14%	17%
Education (37)	29%	7%	21%
Para in Education (30)	9%	22%	13%
General Secretarial (28)	29%	[illegible]	29%
Medical Secretarial (23)	21%	[illegible]	21%
Visual Arts (23)	17%	[illegible]	30%
Legal Secretarial (13)	25%	[illegible]	23%
Physical Education (12)	40%	[illegible]	25%
Medical Technology (9)	-		-

Speech and Drama (8)	29%	-	25%
Business Education (7)	50%	20%	29%
Medical Assistant (7)	-	-	-
Library Aide (4)	-	-	-

Numbers in parentheses are enrollments in these programs

E - "F" Grades (by courses)

Numbers in parentheses reflect percentage of total students enrolled in the course

Fine Arts - zero courses

Humanities - 7 courses

English 101	33 (10%)
Language 101F	1 (9%)
Language 101S	1 (9%)
English 105	2 (3%)
English 201	5 (5%)
English 202	28 (15%)
English 207	2 (16%)

Education - 5 courses

Education 101	11 (6%)
Education 103	2 (5%)
Education 114	2 (3%)
Education 116	2 (4%)
Education 203	2 (3%)
Education 210	1 (9%)

Business - 9 courses

Business 101	17 (16%)
Business 102	1 (5%)
Business 112	1 (6%)
Business 201	3 (10%)
Business 202	1 (7%)
Retail Merchandising 105	1 (3%)
Retail Merchandising 203	2 (9%)
Retail Merchandising 207	5 (24%)
Retail Merchandising 211	1 (2%)

Science - 2 courses

Physical Science 106	16 (12%)
Biological Science 107	4 (5%)

Social Studies - 9 courses

Social Studies 103	1 (4%)
Social Studies 115	1 (5%)
Social Studies 121	9 (12%)
Social Studies 127	1 (9%)
Social Studies 151	15 (7%)
Social Studies 152	4 (7%)
Social Studies 171	8 (7%)
Social Studies 275	4 (7%)

Physical Education - 2 courses

P.E. 107	1 (5%)
P.E. 204	1 (7%)

F - "F" Grades (As a percentage of total students in the program)

1. Merchandising (107)	30%
2. Visual Arts (23)	30%
3. Business Education (7)	29%
4. General Secretarial (28)	29%
5. General Studies (66)	27%
6. Physical Education (12)	25%
7. Speech and Drama (8)	25%
8. Legal Secretary (13)	23%
9. Education (37)	21%
10. Medical Secretary (23)	21%
11. Liberal Arts (41)	17%
12. Para in Education (30)	13%
13. Early Childhood (220)	13%
14. Library Aide (4)	-
15. Medical Technology (9)	-
16. Medical Assistant (7)	-

G - Summary

(1) Better than 1 out of 5 Harcum students received one or more "F" grades (22%)

(2) Percentage-wise, almost twice the percentage of resident students vs day students received "F" grades (25% & 14%).

(3) Eight out of each 100 students (8%) received 2 or more "F" grades.

(4) Better than 6 of each 10 "F" grade students (63%) were in either Early Childhood Education, Merchandising or General Studies curricula. Also, 63% of the student body are enrolled in these three programs.

(5) Twenty five percent or more of the students enrolled in six programs received "F" grades.

Merchandising	(30%)
Visual Arts	(30%)
Business Ed.	(29%)
General Secretarial	(29%)
General Studies	(27%)
Physical Ed.	(25%)

Boris Blai, Jr.
Research Consultant

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE
BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

HOW "CALCULATED RISKS" FARE AT HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE

1. Various higher education reports increasingly reveal the admission to college of academic-risk students. Their success in maintaining satisfactory records of academic and non-academic progress vary considerably. However, most significantly, substantial numbers of such "calculated risk" students evidently do achieve at a satisfactory level of performance as evidenced by their success in earning appropriate-level associate and/or baccalaureate degrees.

2. What has been the Harcum experience with such "calculated risk" admissions? To offer an interim answer to this question, the following paragraphs summarize the experience to date for the first sizeable group of such admissions which occurred in September 1968.

3. For the year 1968-69, 46 students were accepted either provisionally, or as non-matriculated students (not enrolled in a degree-earning program). This represented 13% of the incoming class and the first semester cumulative averages earned by each curriculum group are summarized below, the numbers in parenthesis indicating the number enrolled in that curriculum.

1) Medical Secretary = 2.7 (2)
2) Retail Merchandising = 2.3 (2)
3) Executive Secretary - 2.2 (1)
4) Library Aide = 2.2 (4)
5) Education = 2.1 (3)
6) Physical Education = 1.9 (2)
7) Early Childhood Ed. = 1.8 (19)
8) Paraprofessional in Ed. = 1.8 (8)
9) General Studies = 1.3 (5)

Total Cumulative Average = 1.8

Range of Cumulative Averages = .5 through 3.0

4. The number who earned first semester 2.0 or better cumulative averages was 53.3%. The number who earned first semester 1.8 or better cumulative averages was 68%.

5. The second semester cumulative averages earned by these provisional/ non-matriculated students are summarized below by curriculum groups.

1) Medical Secretary = 2.6 (2)
2) Retail Merchandising = 2.5 (2)
3) Executive Secretary = 2.2 (1)
4) Education = 2.1 (3)
5) Library Aide = 2.1 (4)
6) Early Childhood Ed. = 2.0 (16)
7) Physical Education = 2.0 (2)
8) General Studies = 1.5 (6)
9) Paraprofessional = 1.4 (4)

Total Cumulative Average = 1.9

Range of Cumulative Averages = .5 through 3.0

6. Comparing the tabulations in paragraphs 3 and 5, it is evident that there was improvement in the average performance of the group in terms of cumulative averages earned. This is further evidenced in the fact that 19 of the 46, or 41%, improved their second semester cumulative averages as compared with their first semester averages. Only 10 or 21% earned lower averages.

7. The number who earned second semester 2.0 or better cumulative averages was 55%. The number who earned second semester 1.8 or better cumulative averages was 65%. Two students in this group earned honors list averages.

8. Of the original 46 students 44, or 95%, completed their first semester. Of the 46 students 40, or 87%, completed their second semester. Of the original 46 students 29, or 63%, returned for their second year. This compares with an average senior return rate for this class of 76% or a drop-out rate among this group of 37%. Therefore the junior-senior attrition among this group of provisional/non-matriculated students was 13% greater than for the class as a whole.

9. From this report of interim data, it is tentatively concluded that their group level of academic achievement is sufficiently high to warrant the continued careful selection of such marginal students into future Harcum freshman classes.

11. Reports of second year achievement, degrees earned and vocational follow up of this group as alumnae will be prepared in the future.

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